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Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment Academicians' Actual Hours of Workload

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of a study on the actual notional hours of workload for academicians at the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment (FKAB) of University Kebangsaan Malaysia. The study is aimed at ascertaining the hours allocated for teaching, supervising postgraduate and undergraduate students, conducting research, publishing, attending conference, providing consultation as well as public services. The study involved 29 academicians comprising Professors, Associate Professors, and lecturer (with and without PhD) from all five departments namely Mechanical and Materials Engineering, Electrical, Electronics and Systems Engineering, Civil and Structural Engineering, Chemical and Process Engineering and Architecture. The time allocated by each respondent for teaching:research:services is compared to the percentage agreed in the academicians Performance Assessment Report (LNP), that is 30%:60%:10%. Results from the study indicated that 62.1% of the respondents devoted 40 hours more than the designated time per week. This issue is critical and has to be rectified in a systematic and strategic manner.

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Keywords: actual notional hours of workload; academician, teaching and learning, research, services

1. Introduction

The Institute of Higher Learning Rating System 2009 (SETARA '09) was set up to measure the quality of teaching and learning for first degree of universities and university colleges in Malaysia. The SETARA '09 sets tier 6 as the highest level of distinction and tier 1 as the lowest. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) is rated tier 5 which is excellent and reflects a learning institution of a Research University standard. According to Yusrizal & Halim, 2009, academicians are the pillar of excellence for an institution mainly because an academician is the closest individual to students at the university. Each academician's duty is outlined as their Key Performance Indicator (KPI). An academician's KPI is not only based on their intrinsic tasks such as teaching, conducting research and providing consultation service. Academicians are also expected to acquire research grants, supervise graduate and undergraduate students, publishing their research findings in high impact journals, present research findings in seminars, perform administrative works, and be involved in various committees at the departmental, faculty, university, national and international levels, provide free advice or consultation and performing other assigned duties from time to time. The aim of this study is to determine the appropriate time load per week for academicians from four main categories which are Professor, Associate Professor, lecturers (with and without Ph.D). Two objectives have been set for the study: i) To determine the workload of academicians ii) To ascertain whether the distribution of time which has been outlined is fully

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utilized by the academicians in FKAB. This paper presents the actual hours load practiced by a selected number of academicians at the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment (FKAB).

2. Methods

In this study, the research activities involved preparation of a questionnaire, data collection, analysis and finally the processing stage (Ibrahim et al., 2008). Initially, the questions to be submitted to the respondents are evaluated based on an academicians's KPI and data obtained from literature review which is the secondary data. At the next stage, data collection was performed by distributing the questionnaire to 29 randomly chosen academicians from five departments in FKAB. Out of the 29 academicians, 6 are Professors, 8 Associate Professors, 8 lecturers with PhD and 7 lecturers without PhD. Almost all of the information obtained were primary data which are analysed using descriptive statistic method to obtain a clear picture of the results.

3. Results and Discussion

The university has outlined five basic values of work ethics namely truthfulness, honesty and trustworthiness, fairness, responsibility and accountability (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2010). These five basic values are inter-related in an orderly ethical arrangement. In UKM, an academicians's personality assessment is evaluated according to criteria such as compliance and willingness to perform their duties with full responsibility and high integrity. The main duties of an academicians relate to education, research and service. Some academicians are appointed to handle academic administrative task. However, no matter how much work load has been entrusted to them, every academicians has to constantly being assessed by the faculty.

Figure 1 shows the allocated work time of 29 respondents. 62.1% of the respondents fully utilize the 40 hours work time as outlined by FKAB in the Performance Assessment Report (LNP). This study includes four categories of the academicians's tasks which are education, research and consultation, service and administration. Results of the study as shown in Figure 2 indicated that 82.7% of the respondents utilized the outlined time for teaching, that is $30\% \times 40 \text{ hours} = 12 \text{ hours per week}$. The respondents' focus are still in teaching and postgraduate students' supervision although they have other work commitments. In addition, they monitor students' tasks either in the laboratory or design projects and undergraduate students' final project.

Research is a creative effort carried out systematically through methods and new approaches in order to produce new knowledge, thinking and theory for the benefit of the citizens, industry and country which are specific and multidisciplinary (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2010). Figure 3 shows 17.2% of the respondents perform all the tasks related to research and consultation according to the outlined time that is $60\% \times 40 \text{ hours} = 24 \text{ hours per week}$.

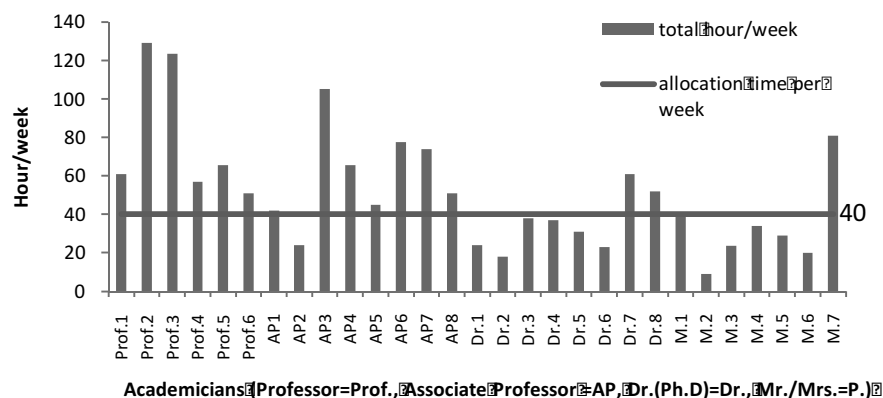


Figure 1 Utilized and Weighted time (hour/week)

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